

establishing for each molecule a respective description, by comparison of the molecule's molecular structure to a set of molecular substructure keys;

grouping the molecules based on similarity of their respective descriptions, so as to define groups of structurally similar molecules;

selecting at least one of the groups of structurally similar molecules based on an extent to which the molecules in the selected group have activity characteristics reflecting the given activity;

for each of the at least one selected group, identifying at least one molecular feature set common to all of the molecules in the selected group; and

outputting data indicative of at least one identified molecular feature set.

70. (New) The computerized method of claim 69, wherein grouping the molecules based on similarity of their respective descriptions comprises:

applying a clustering algorithm to cluster the molecules based on their descriptions.

71. (New) The computerized method of claim 70, wherein the clustering algorithm comprises SOM clustering.

72. (New) The computerized method of claim 69, wherein selecting at least one of the groups based on an extent to which the molecules in the selected group have activity

selecting a group in response to the group containing at least a predetermined number of molecules in the group that have activity characteristics reflecting the given activity.

73. (New) The computerized method of claim 69, wherein selecting at least one of the groups based on an extent to which the molecules in the selected group have activity characteristics reflecting the given activity comprises:

selecting a group in response to at least a predetermined percent of the molecules in the group having an activity characteristic reflecting the given activity.

74. (New) The computerized method of claim 69, wherein identifying at least one molecular feature set common to all of the molecules in the selected group comprises identifying a maximum common substructure of the molecules in the selected group.

75. (New) The computerized method of claim 74, wherein identifying a maximum common substructure of the molecules in the selected group comprises applying subgraph isomorphism to compare the descriptions of the molecules in the selected group.

76. (New) The computerized method of claim 74, wherein identifying a maximum common substructure of the molecules in the selected group comprises applying a genetic algorithm to compare the descriptions of the molecules in the selected group.

77. (New) The computerized method of claim 69, wherein the molecular feature set

78. (New) The computerized method of claim 69, wherein the molecular feature set common to all of the molecules in the selected group is a non-contiguous combination of molecular features.

79. (New) The computerized method of claim 69, wherein identifying at least one molecular feature set common to all of the molecules in selected group comprises:

identifying a plurality of molecular feature sets each common to all of the molecules in the selected group.

80. (New) The computerized method of claim 79, wherein outputting data indicative of at least one identified molecular feature set comprises:

outputting data indicative of the plurality of molecular feature sets.

81. (New) A computer-readable medium containing a set of machine language instructions executable by a computer to carry out the method of claim 69.

82. (New) A machine programmed with machine language instructions executable by a processor to carry out the method of claim 69.

83. (New) A method of identifying a molecular feature set likely to be responsible for a molecular activity, comprising:
receiving into a computer a set of input data that represents molecules and that defines, respectively for each molecule, a molecular structure and an activity characteristic;

operating the computer to establish for each molecule a respective description vector, by comparison of the molecule's molecular structure to a set of molecular substructure keys;

operating the computer to apply a clustering algorithm so as to sort the molecules into groups based on similarity of their respective description vectors;

operating the computer to select at least one of the groups based on an extent to which the molecules in the selected group have activity characteristics reflecting the given activity;

operating the computer to identify, for each of the at least one selected group, a maximum common substructure of the molecules in the selected group; and

outputting from the computer data indicative of at least one identified molecular feature set.

84. (New) A computerized method of identifying a molecular feature set likely to be responsible for a given activity, based on a set of input data that represents molecules and that defines respectively for each molecule a molecular structure and an activity characteristic, the method comprising:

(a) establishing for each molecule a respective description, by comparison of the molecule's molecular structure to a set of molecular substructure keys;

(b) grouping the molecules based on similarity of their respective descriptions, so as to define groups of structurally similar molecules;

(c) selecting at least one of the groups of structurally similar molecules based on an extent to which the molecules in the selected group have activity characteristics reflecting the given activity;

(d) for each of the at least one selected group, identifying at least one molecular feature set common to all of the molecules in selected group;

(e) adding at least one identified molecular feature set as a new substructure key in the set of molecular substructure keys, and then repeating elements (a) through (d); and

(f) outputting data indicative of at least one identified molecular feature set.

85. (New) The method of claim 84, wherein outputting data indicative of at least one identified molecular feature set comprises:

determining which identified molecular feature set has the most atoms, and outputting data indicative of that molecular feature set.

86. (New) The method of claim 84, wherein grouping the molecules based on similarity of their respective descriptions comprises SOM clustering the molecules based on their respective descriptions.

87. (New) The method of claim 86, wherein SOM clustering the molecules results in a SOM grid reflecting clusters of molecules, and wherein outputting data indicative of at least one identified molecular feature set comprises:

outputting a screen display that depicts contents of the SOM grid.

instructions executable by a computer to carry out the method of claim 84.

89. (New) A machine programmed with program instructions executable by a processor to carry out the method of claim 84.

90. (New) A processing system for modeling chemical structure-activity relationships through artificial intelligence analysis of an input data set representing molecules, each of the molecules having a set of features and an activity characteristic, the processing system comprising, in combination:

means for establishing for each molecule a respective description, by comparison of the molecule's molecular structure to a set of molecular substructure keys;

means for grouping the molecules based on similarity of their respective descriptions, so as to define groups of structurally similar molecules;

means for selecting at least one of the groups of structurally similar molecules based on an extent to which the molecules in the selected group have activity characteristics reflecting the given activity;

means for identifying at least one molecular feature set common to all of the molecules in each of at least one selected group; and

means for outputting data indicative of at least one identified molecular feature set.

Remarks

In the Office Action mailed July 16, 2001, the Examiner rejected claims 22-38, 63-66 and

claims 39-41, 67-70, 71-73, 74-76, 77-79, 80-82, 83-85, 86-88, 89-91, 92-94, 95-97, 98-100, 101-103, 104-106, 107-109, 110-112, 113-115, 116-118, 119-121, 122-124, 125-127, 128-130, 131-133, 134-136, 137-139, 140-142, 143-145, 146-148, 149-151, 152-154, 155-157, 158-160, 161-163, 164-166, 167-169, 170-172, 173-175, 176-178, 179-181, 182-184, 185-187, 188-190, 191-193, 194-196, 197-199, 200-202, 203-205, 206-208, 209-211, 212-214, 215-217, 218-220, 221-223, 224-226, 227-229, 230-232, 233-235, 236-238, 239-241, 242-244, 245-247, 248-250, 251-253, 254-256, 257-259, 260-262, 263-265, 266-268, 269-271, 272-274, 275-277, 278-280, 281-283, 284-286, 287-289, 290-292, 293-295, 296-298, 299-301, 302-304, 305-307, 308-310, 311-313, 314-316, 317-319, 320-322, 323-325, 326-328, 329-331, 332-334, 335-337, 338-340, 341-343, 344-346, 347-349, 350-352, 353-355, 356-358, 359-361, 362-364, 365-367, 368-370, 371-373, 374-376, 377-379, 380-382, 383-385, 386-388, 389-391, 392-394, 395-397, 398-400, 401-403, 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